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(54) Dual microprocessor electronic trip unit for a circuit Interrupter

range the microprocessors (24 and 46) are assigned to monitor. In one embodiment the electronic trip unit (10) is controlled by a master controller (38) and in turn controls a number of accessory devices (48), wherein one of the microprocessors (46) is a slave to the master controller network (38) and the other microprocessor (24) is a master to the accessory slave network (48). The microprocessors (24 and 46) communicate with each other and either one can trip the circuit on detection of a fault condition.



DescriptionCross References to Related Application

- 5 [0001] This application is related to Patent Application Serial Number _____ (Docket 97-PDA-013) filed concurrently herewith.

Field of the Invention

- 10 [0002] This invention relates in general to electrical switching apparatus, and more particularly to such apparatus that employ a plurality of microprocessors to monitor separate current ranges.

Background Information

- 15 [0003] Circuit breakers are widely used in industrial, commercial and residential applications for protecting electrical conductors and apparatus from damage due to excessive current flow. Initially used as a direct replacement for fuses, circuit breakers have been gradually called upon to provide more sophisticated types of protection other than merely interrupting the circuit when the current flow exceeds a certain level. More elaborate time-current trip characteristics have been developed such that a circuit breaker can rapidly open upon very high current with the time delay being
20 roughly inversely proportional to the degree of overload. Circuit breakers are also available which interrupt upon the detection of ground fault currents. As the complexity of electrical distribution circuits has increased, the control portions of the circuit breaker have been interconnected to provide selected coordination.

- [0004] During the late 1960's, solid state electronic trip units were developed for use in high power, low voltage circuit breakers. These electronic trip units performed functions such as instantaneous and delayed tripping which were tradi-
25 tionally achieved by magnetic and thermal means. The improved accuracy and flexibility of the solid state electronic trip units resulted in their wide spread acceptance.

- [0005] The earliest electronic trip unit circuit designs utilized discreet components such as transistors, resistors and capacitors. More recently, designs such as disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,428,022 have included microprocessors which provide improved performance and flexibility. Due to the severe space limitations in low voltage circuit breakers,
30 the assignee of this application has developed a special purpose integrated circuit known as a SuRE Chip™, which incorporates a microcontroller core processor, volatile and nonvolatile memory, and an eight bit analog-to-digital converter, four bit pre-ranging circuit amplifiers, comparators, and an input analog multiplexer which provides all of the essential analog and digital circuit functions in a single monolithic device. This device is described in detail in U.S. Patent No. 5,525,985, issued June 11, 1996.

- 35 [0006] These digital systems sample the current waveforms periodically to generate a digital representation of the current. The microprocessor uses the samples to execute algorithms which implement the protection curve which is typically based upon a constant value of I^2t where "I" is the value of current and "t" is the time-to-trip. Typically in air circuit breakers and vacuum interrupters, the protection curve provides an instantaneous trip, a long delay trip and, if appropriate, a short delay trip function. In some circuit interrupters, the microprocessor also performs calculations for
40 metering such as determining the RMS value of the highest phase current.

- [0007] It is also common today to have a plurality of such circuit interrupters monitored and controlled by a central network control station such as is described in U.S. Patent No. 5,420,799, issued May 30, 1995. In turn, the circuit inter-
45 rupters usually have mechanical status indicating accessory devices mounted within the casings which are used by external and remote monitoring and control equipment. Examples of these are auxiliary contacts which follow the open/close status of the circuit breaker and bell alarm contacts which are closed if the breaker is in the tripped condition. While the central monitoring and control network typically communicates digitally with multiple circuit interrupters over a common network, the connection between the internally mounted mechanical contacts within the individual circuit interrupters and the remote slave devices is accomplished in parallel using two wires per pair of contacts. Usually multiple sets of auxiliary contacts are required and thus multiple pairs of wires are needed. The installation of this wire
50 is costly and time consuming. In addition to digital status information, it is also desirable to provide certain analog information such as the value of load current, bus voltage, power factor, etc. Many remote utilization devices, such as programmable logic controllers, require this information as 4-to-20 ma current values. Typically, circuit breaker trip units don't provide 4-to-20 ma outputs.

- [0008] The increase in related functional versatility that the electronic trip units of circuit breakers have added employ-
55 ing the capabilities of microprocessors has required the processing circuitry to monitor wide ranges in current and related parameters which can vary from open or a zero state, to a normal operating range where most of the metering calculations are performed, to the other extreme or short circuit states which exceed the normal operating range by a factor 10 or greater. Scaling of the monitored value is required to enable the microprocessor to monitor the entire range

below its saturation limitations. The extent of scaling required to accommodate the trip values can affect the accuracy of the calculations performed in the metering range, the normal operating state of the protected device. It can also affect the microprocessor's ability to monitor harmonics and small distortions in the current.

[0009] Accordingly, an improved circuit interrupter is desired that has more flexibility in communicating with its auxiliary slave devices and has increased sensitivity to the monitored current over its normal operating range.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] An improved electronic trip unit having a first microprocessor which monitors a load current outside of its normal operating range and is responsive to a given state of the load current to initiate a signal to open the load current circuit. The electronic trip unit also includes a second microprocessor for monitoring a characteristic of the load current in its normal operating range. In the preferred arrangement, the monitored load is scaled to different factors for each microprocessor so that the value of the respective monitored ranges inputted to the separate microprocessors are maximized for the respective assigned functions, within the limits of the saturation levels of the processing circuitry. In another embodiment, one of the processors is a dedicated interface to a master control network while the other processor is an interface to an auxiliary accessory network. One microprocessor controls an overcurrent protection function while the other controls voltage based protection and metering functions. Desirably the processors communicate with each other and either processor can initiate a trip upon detection of a fault condition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] A full understanding of the invention can be gained from the following description of the preferred embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram, primarily in block form, illustrating a circuit interrupter configured in accordance with this invention.

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram showing the accessory bus network of this invention;

Figure 3A is a representation of a control message employed by this invention;

Figure 3B is a representation of a data message employed by this invention;

Figure 4 is a graphical representation of examples of modulation that can be employed to establish each bit message represented in Figures 3A and B;

Figure 5 is a graphical illustration of the load current-versus-time-to-trip curve over a range of load currents from a no trip value to an instantaneous trip value; and

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a display and switch input panel which can be used by this invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0012] Figure 1 illustrates an electronic trip unit 10 of the invention in combination with ancillary components used for protection and capture of waveforms in an AC electrical power distribution system 12, which represents the load. The power distribution system 12 illustrated has three phase conductors 14A, B and C, and a neutral conductor 14N. Current transformers 16A, B, C, and N sense current flowing into each of these conductors. Current transformer 16G is a zero sequence transformer which indirectly measures ground current by directly measuring the sum of the phase and neutral currents. These currents are sensed by the conditioning circuits 80 and 82 which prepare the signals for processing by the analog-to-digital (A/D) converters 22 and 84, respectively. Phase-to-neutral voltages are also sensed from the three phase conductors 14A, B and C by the potential transformers 18A, B and C and are inputted to conditioning circuit 82 for processing by the A/D converter 84. The conditioning circuits 80 and 82 scale the current and voltage signals to a suitable range for conversion by the A/D converters 22 and 84 for input to microprocessors 24 and 46, respectively. For example, the microprocessors can be microcomputers.

[0013] The A/D converter 84 samples analog voltages and currents at sampling instances determined by interrupts generated by the microprocessor 46 in a manner more particularly described in U.S. Patent No. 5,600,527, issued February 4, 1997, and the patents referenced therein. The microprocessor 46 utilizes the data generated by the digital samples to provide voltage based protection functions for example, under/over voltage protection for the electrical system 12, and also uses the samples for waveform capture and harmonic analysis for metering and display purposes.

[0014] The microprocessor 46 communicates with a display and switch input panel 28 more fully illustrated in Figure 6. The panel 28 serves as one means of interface with the user. It is through the panel 28 that the user can control the operation of the circuit breaker 10, and monitor the AC electrical power system 12, including the harmonic content of the waveform and various measured values such as power factor. To this end, the panel 28 has a display 30 on which the harmonic content of the waveforms can be presented to the user. The panel 28 can also be used to input values,

e.g., the circuit breaker protection set points.

[0015] In implementing the overcurrent protection functions, the second microprocessor 24 operates in a protection mode to generate a trip signal when any one of the current/time characteristics of a delayed trip protection function is exceeded. This trip signal is passed to a trip mechanism 32 which opens separable contacts 34A, B and C in the three phase conductors 14A, B and C of the electrical system 12. The trip unit 32 is typically a mechanically latched electronically released mechanism. Although typically not provided in the United States, additional separate contacts can be included to also interrupt current in the neutral conductor 14N.

[0016] The microprocessors 24 and 46 can also communicate with one another through a serial peripheral interface (SPI) link 42. This allows, for example, communication between microprocessor 24 and panel 28. The microprocessor 46 can also communicate with a remote processor using the communication link 36 which is an analog transmit and receive circuit known as a transceiver. The transceiver 36 enables the circuit breaker 10 to provide information to and be controlled by a remote processor such as a central control network station 38. A central control network that can be employed for this purpose is described in U.S. Patent No. 5,420,799, issued May 30, 1995. Central control networks of that type typically communicate over a common bus using a digital, asynchronous communication protocol.

[0017] Figure 5 illustrates a plot of the load current value versus time-to-trip from a no trip region to a device that experiences a short period of extremely high load current before entering an instantaneous trip condition. Reference character 76 illustrates the normal operating range. Reference character 78 identifies the broad current range that can be experienced under different trip conditions spanning from long delay to instantaneous. In some cases the current at the point of trip can be a factor of 10 of the normal operating current value. The broad current range makes it very difficult for a single microprocessor such as the microcomputers 24 and 46 shown in Figure 1 to perform all circuit trip and metering functions accurately. The scaling factor that the conditioning circuits 80 and 82 would have to apply to maintain all of the signals that the microprocessor would be exposed to below its saturation state makes it very difficult for the processor to detect subtle changes, e.g., harmonic, in the normal operating range. Figure 1 illustrates a further improvement provided by this invention in splitting the processing functions between two processors 24 and 46. In this way the monitoring, voltage based protection and metering functions and algorithms that need to be processed over the normal operating range of the power circuit 12 can be managed by the processor 46 while the overcurrent trip related functions can be handled by the microprocessor 24. Both processors can then communicate with trip circuit 32. In this way the conditioning circuit 82 need not scale the monitored currents to the coarse range that otherwise would have been required and the microprocessor 46 has more information available to it from the signal to perform its given functions. The conditioning circuits 80 and 82 permit different ranging factors for their respective microprocessors 24 and 46, and enable the respective microprocessors to implement different sampling rates which is sometime beneficial as noted in Patent No. 5,600,527.

[0018] Thus the microprocessor 24 provides the overcurrent protection and communicates with the trip circuit 32 to implement an overcurrent instantaneous trip requirement. The microprocessor 46 monitors auxiliary contacts 34 on the circuit breaker 11 through a breaker status circuit 26 to indicate the breaker's open/closed condition. The microprocessor 46 also communicates with relay outputs 20 that provide local breaker status information such as high load, ground fault, etc. to a remote location. The microprocessor 24 communicates through a second transceiver 40 to an accessory bus network 48 which will be described hereafter.

[0019] Present day circuit breakers typically have internal contacts or relays which can be wired to a remote location to provide a remote indication of the digital status of the circuit breaker. The status can include an indication of whether the breaker is in an opened, closed, or tripped condition. A pair of wires from the breaker is required for each remote status indication. Remote open or close control of a circuit breaker can also be provided utilizing a pair of wires for each function from a remote location to the circuit breaker. An open command can consist of a voltage on a pair of wires connected to the breakers shunt trip circuit. A close command can consist of a voltage on a pair of wires connected to the breakers motor operator. A pair of wires is required for each remote digital input/output function. The installation of these wires is both costly and time consuming.

[0020] In addition to digital status information, it is also desirable to provide certain analog information such as the value of load current, bus voltage, power factor, etc. Furthermore, most remote utilization equipment such as programmable logic controllers require the information as 4-to-20 ma current signals. Circuit breaker trip units don't typically provide 4-to-20 ma analog outputs.

[0021] This invention replaces parallel pairs of separate wires to the various remote accessory devices associated with a given electronic trip unit 10 with a two wire, asynchronous, serial communication network 48 that is illustrated in Figure 2. The network 48, called an accessory bus, is dedicated to a given protective device such as the electronic trip unit 10. The electronic trip unit 10 will serve as the bus "master" that controls remote "slave" devices which are the various analog and digital input and output accessory units 50, 52, 54, 56, 58 and 60. The information to and from remote accessory units to the master trip unit 10 is carried over a single, rather than multiple, pair of wires 44. Figure 2 shows six representative types of accessory devices, each representative of the type of communication it provides or requires. For example, device 50 is representative of an accessory which provides a digital output; device 52 is representative of

an accessory that accepts a digital input; device 54 is representative of an accessory that provides an analog output; device 56 is representative of an accessory that accepts an analog input; remote device 58 is representative of an accessory providing a remote display; and interface 60 is an accessory bus interface for devices such as a personal computer or a communications MODEM. It should be appreciated that one or more of these functions may be required by a single remote device such as a programmable logic controller. One special digital input and output device is a programmable time-delayed close relay which can be used to start a generator following a power outage. The delay would be sent from the electronic trip unit 10 to the relay over the network 48 during normal operation. Should the power fail, the timer within the relay, powered by a "super cap", would start timing. After time out, the timing circuit discharges a capacitor into a magnetically latched relay which transfers the relay to a closed condition. The relay is wired into the generator start circuit which allows the generator to be started to restore power. When power is restored the latched relay is restored to the open condition. The network 48 can also be provided with an interface 60 that can alternately serve as the interface with a personal computer for purposes of inputting, monitoring and storing breaker trip unit 10 setpoints. The interface can also be used to communicate with other networks via a MODEM. Such a MODEM could be a phone connection which initiates a call should a problem exist.

[0022] The address of each slave device can be set by its function, for example, as in Table 1 where "DO" represents digital output devices; "DI" represents digital input devices; where "AO" represents analog output devices; where "AI" represents analog input devices; where "DD" represents digital display devices; and "I" represents an interface to another system.

[TABLE 1]

Type	Address	Hardware	Function
DO	001H	1 or more relay outputs	auxiliary contacts which follow state of circuit breaker
DO	002H	1 or more relay outputs	bell arm contacts which indicate a trip condition
DO	003H	1 or more relay outputs	high load alarm contacts
DO	004H	1 or more relay outputs	ground fault alarm contacts
DO	005H	1 latched relay	time-delayed generator start
DI	007H	2 push button inputs	remote open/close control input
AO	008H	4 to 20 mA output	RMS value of highest phase current scaled 4 mA = 0A and 20 mA = rated current
AI	009H	3 RTD inputs	circuit breaker terminal or switchgear bus temperature
DD	00AH	remote digital display	provides remote means for reading breaker setting, metered values, etc.
I	00BH	RS232/RS485	PC or MODEM interface to electronic trip unit

* H indicates a hexadecimal address

[0023] Setting the address of each slave device by its function eliminates the need for the electronic trip unit to be programmed for a given application. Alternately the display and switch input 28 can be used to provide such programming. This allows a single slave device such as a digital output unit 50 to be programmed for multiple purposes. Each slave device would need to have means such as switches to allow its address to be set. Also the display and switch input 28 can be used as shown in Figure 6 to program the bus. The display is shown as having three rows with eight alpha/numeric characters per row. The first row is used for column labels such as slave address (ADD), slave relay number (R) and relay function (FN). A digital output slave 50 is identified in row 2 (address 001H). Its relay 1 (it could have for example 4 relays) is programmed to function as an auxiliary contact (AX). Row 3 illustrates that the same slave device 50 has its relay 3 programmed to function as a bell alarm (BA). Thus the display and switch input device 28 shown in Figure 6 can be used to set the desired address, I/O number, and I/O function. Once programmed the trip unit 10 will verify that the slave device at a given address is the type specified. If not, the display would blink to annunciate a programming error.

[0024] The microprocessor 24 within the electronic trip unit 10 communicates with accessory bus devices using control messages illustrated in Figure 3A and data messages illustrated in Figure 3B. The communication consists of 33 bit asynchronous messages. The first two bits, bit 0 and bit 1, are start bits which are used to synchronize the receiver. The third bit, bit 2, is a control or data bit. As shown in Figure 3A, this bit is 1 if the message is a control message. If it

is, then bit 10 through bit 22 contains the 12-bit slave destination address.

[0025] Bit 3 through bit 6 consist of an instruction field which is used to set the communications hardware. In this accessory bus application, this field will be 0011_B (binary), or 3_H, which enables the addressed slave device to communicate back to the master microprocessor 24. All other slave devices which are not addressed have their communication interface disabled by the message. This establishes a master-slave communications network as a slave can speak only when enabled.

[0026] The command and subcommand fields, bit 7 through bit 9 and bit 23 through bit 26 are used to pass a command request to the slave. As an example, should the slave be a digital output device consisting of four relays the command field could consist of the desired state of the relays while the sub-command could be the complement of the desired state. Thus if a 0 means that a relay should be de-energized and a 1 energized, then a command of 0010_B would mean that relays 4, 3 and 1 should be de-energized while relay 2 is energized. The slave will not respond to this request unless the sub-command field contains the complement of the command field or 1101_B. The command and subcommand field's definitions are thus specific to the slave device function.

[0027] The data message shown in Figure 3B is typically used to send data to/from a slave device. Bit 3 through bit 26 form a 24-bit data field. Should the slave be an analog input/output device consisting of two 4-to-20 mA inputs and two 4-to-20 mA outputs the communication message protocol master-to-slave could be as follows. First the master microprocessor 24 would send an instruction of 3_H to the slave and a command and subcommand which would instruct the slave to send the value of its two analog inputs and be prepared to accept the desired value of two analog outputs. The 24 bit data field would be considered to consist of two 12 bit fields where bit 3 through bit 14 represent analog value 1 and bit 15 through bit 26 represent analog value 2. The scaling would be such that the maximum value could be 20 mA = FFF_H or 4095_D, while the minimum value would be 4 mA = 333_H or 819_D. A value less than 333_H such as zero indicates that the analog value is invalid or not used.

[0028] The Analog Input Module 54 shown in Figure 2 can be used, for example, to measure bus bar temperature with the switchgear near the breaker terminal connection. Such a temperature measurement could be made by means of a resistance temperature detector (RTD). The voltage output of the RTD would be an input to Analog Input Module 54. The Circuit Breaker Electronic Trip Unit 10 can then read this value, display it on the Display and Switch Input 28, and trip the breaker if the temperature reading is too high. A high reading can occur if the breaker's contacts are worn or damaged. A poor contact can have a high resistance which will make the breaker's terminal run too hot, even if the current is below the full load rated value.

[0029] The Digital Input module 52 shown in Figure 2 can be used to provide a remote open/close control station. For safety it is desirable to be able to close a breaker without standing directly in front of the unit. Two normally opened switches feeding a Digital Input module 52 can be used for this purpose. One normally opened switch would be labeled OPEN while the other would be labeled CLOSE. The Circuit Breaker Electronic Trip Unit 10 could read these two switches such that if one and only one switch is closed the breaker would perform the requested action. If both are opened or closed no action would be taken. Such a request would be confirmed by multiple reads to avoid false action.

[0030] The Remote Display 58 shown in Figure 2 could be used to display Circuit Breaker Electronic Trip Unit 10 analog and digital information such as is normally displayed at the trip unit on the Display and Switch Panel 28.

[0031] The Accessory Bus Interface 60 shown in Figure 2 has a number of uses. When connected to a personal computer (PC) it can be used as a means for programming the trip unit 10. The PC would have the ability to establish the desired setpoints by means of its display and then on command download the settings from the PC to the Accessory Bus Interface 60. The values would be saved in a non-volatile memory such that the values are preserved during a power outage. The Circuit Breaker Electronic Trip Unit 10 would be able to upload these values on command from the PC. Should a trip unit setting be changed using the Display and Switch Panel 28 the new values would be saved within the trip unit 10 and also downloaded to the Accessory Bus Interface 60. In this way the Accessory Bus Interface 60 will always hold the latest setpoint values. Should the trip unit 10 be changed it will be possible to upload the old values into the trip unit from the Accessory Bus Interface 60. The Accessory Bus Interface 60 can also be used as a communications MODEM connection such as a phone connection. This would allow the trip unit 10 to initiate a phone call should a circuit problem be detected.

[0032] Figure 4 illustrates a number of modulation examples that can be used to carry information on the asynchronous, serial communication accessory network. Waveform 62 is known as "non return to 0" modulation format "NRZ"; waveform 64 is known as "return to 0" modulation format "RTZ"; waveform 66 is known as "return to complement" modulation format "RTC"; waveform 68 is known as "amplitude shift keying" modulation format "ASK"; waveform 70 is known as "frequency shift keying" modulation format "FSK"; waveform 72 is known as "phase shift keying" modulation format "PSK." A BIT length is illustrated in Figure 4 by reference character 74.

[0033] It should be appreciated that the foregoing protocols are exemplary and others may be employed without detracting from the invention. In addition, accessory bus 48 and the central controller 38 can employ completely different and distinct protocols.

[0034] Thus, in accordance with the preferred embodiment described heretofore, the microprocessor 24 performs the

overcurrent protection, monitors the breaker status, trips the breaker during overload and fault conditions, and communicates with the microprocessor 46 through a serial peripheral interface (SPI) link 42 and serves as the master for the accessory bus 48. The microprocessor 46 provides metering and voltage based protective relay protection, controls output relays, human interfacing by way of display and switch input panel 28, trip implementation under voltage based fault conditions or upon a request from the central controller 37, communication with the microprocessor 24 through the serial peripheral interface (SPI) link 42, and remote communication with the central controller 37 which serves as a master to the circuit interrupter. Either microprocessor 24 or 46 can trip the breaker should the information shared over the synchronous serial port 42 indicate that either or both microprocessors detect a problem. Thus, this invention provides a number of improvements enabling a layering of networks and improved communication and digital processing capability.

[0035] While specific embodiments of the invention have been described in detail, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, that various modifications and alternatives to those details could be developed in light of the overall teachings of the disclosure. Accordingly, the particular arrangements disclosed are meant to be illustrative only, and not limiting as to the scope of invention which is to be given the full breadth of the claims appended and any and all equivalence thereof.

Claims

1. An electronic trip unit (10) having a first microprocessor (24) which monitors a load current and is responsive to a given state of the load current to initiate a signal to open the load current circuit, including a second microprocessor (46) for monitoring a characteristic of the load current in its normal operating range.
2. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second microprocessors (46) communicates with a master controller (38) and the other of said first and second microprocessors (24) communicates with a remote accessory device (48).
3. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 2 wherein the first and second microprocessors (24 and 46) communicate respectively with said remote accessory device (48) and said master controller over separate and distinct networks.
4. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 3 wherein the separate and distinct networks use different protocols.
5. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 1 wherein the monitored values of the load inputted to the first and second microprocessors are scaled to different levels.
6. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 5 wherein the signal inputted to the second microprocessor (46) is scaled so that the microprocessor input signal representative of the peak value of the load current within its normal operating range is maintained slightly below the saturation level of the second microprocessor's processing circuitry.
7. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 1 wherein the first microprocessor controls an overcurrent protection function and the second microprocessor controls voltage based protection and metering functions.
8. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 7 wherein the first microprocessor (24) monitors current and the second microprocessor (46) monitors current and voltage.
9. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 1 wherein either microprocessor (24 or 46) can initiate a trip to open the load current circuit.
10. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 9 wherein the first and second microprocessors (24 and 46) communicate with each other and either one can initiate a signal to open the load circuit upon an indication of a fault condition.
11. The electronic trip unit (10) of Claim 1 wherein the second microprocessor (46) communicates with a network controller (38) and the first microprocessor (24) communicates with an accessory bus (46) through separate, distinct asynchronous communication links.
12. A method of monitoring a circuit to perform protection and metering functions of an electronic trip unit (10) employing a plurality of microprocessors (24 and 46) comprising the steps of:

performing the metering and voltage based protection functions of the electronic trip unit (10) with a first of the

plurality of microprocessors (46); and

performing instantaneous and overcurrent trip components of the protection functions of the electronic trip unit (10) with a second of the plurality of microprocessors (24).

- 5 **13.** The method of Claim 12 including the step of monitoring the status of contacts of a circuit interrupter connected to the electronic trip unit (10), using the first microprocessor (46).
- 10 **14.** The method of Claim 12 including the step of communicating with a remote auxiliary device (48) using the second microprocessor (24).
- 15 **15.** The method of Claim 12 wherein the first and second microprocessors (24 and 46) monitor current in a load including the step of scaling the current to each microprocessors (24 and 46) to a different value corresponding to the range of values monitored by said first and second microprocessors (24 and 46), respectively, which is established by the function performed respectively by each said first and second microprocessors.
- 20 **16.** The method of Claim 12 including the step of communicating between said first and second microprocessors (24 and 46) wherein either microprocessor can trip the circuit interrupter upon detection of a fault condition.
- 25 **17.** The method of Claim 12 including coordinating operator inputs to the electronic trip unit using said first microprocessor (46).
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- 55

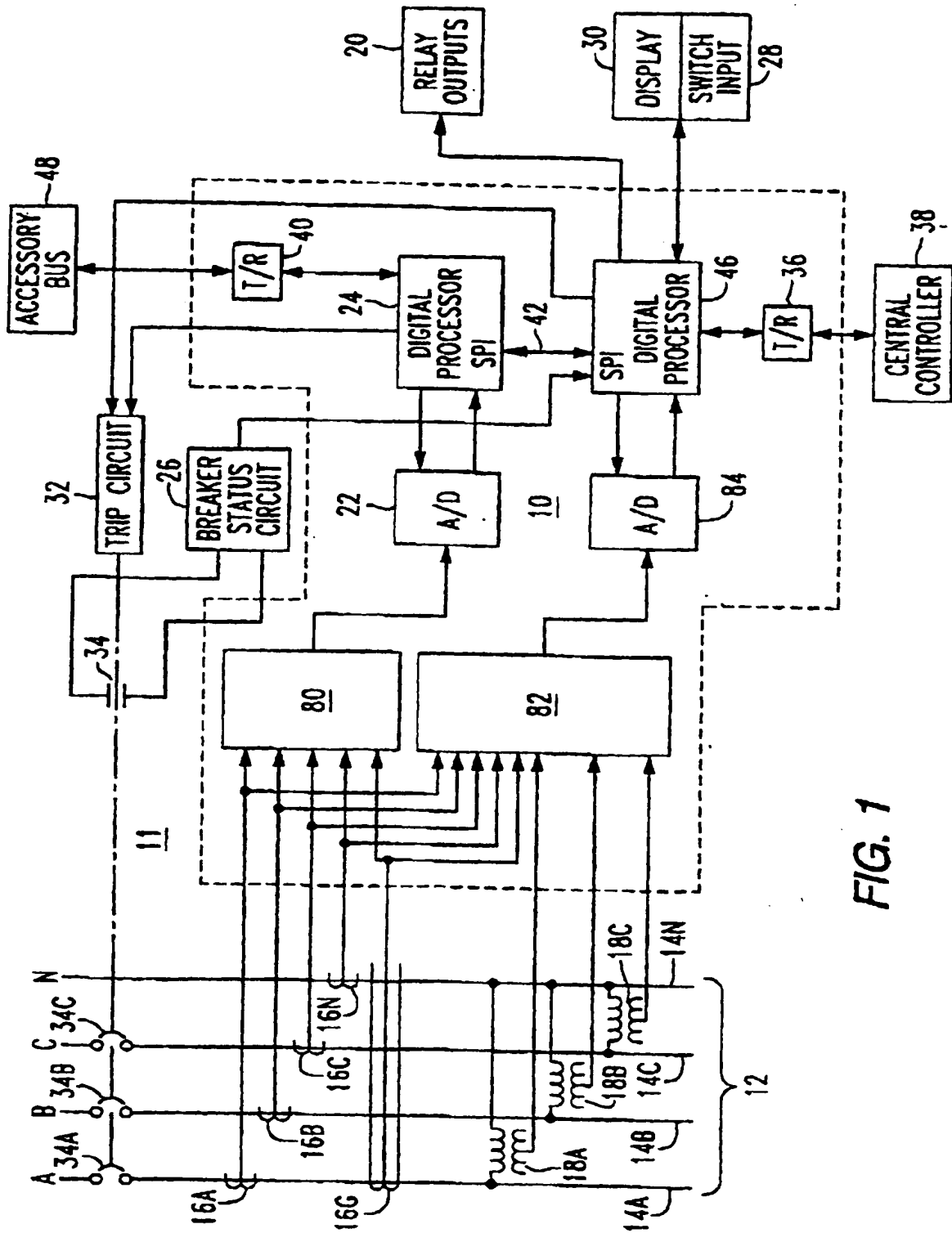


FIG. 1

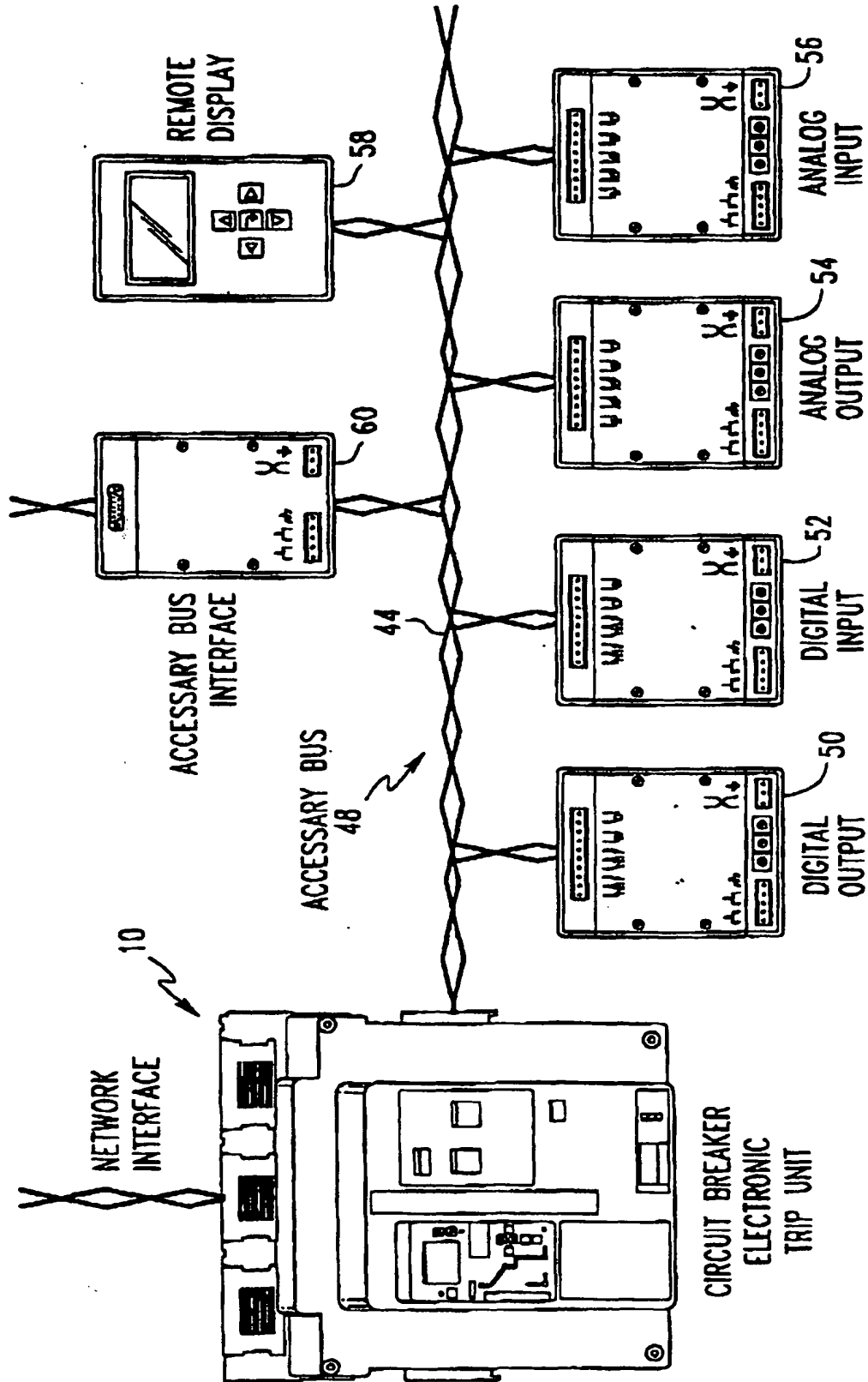


FIG. 2

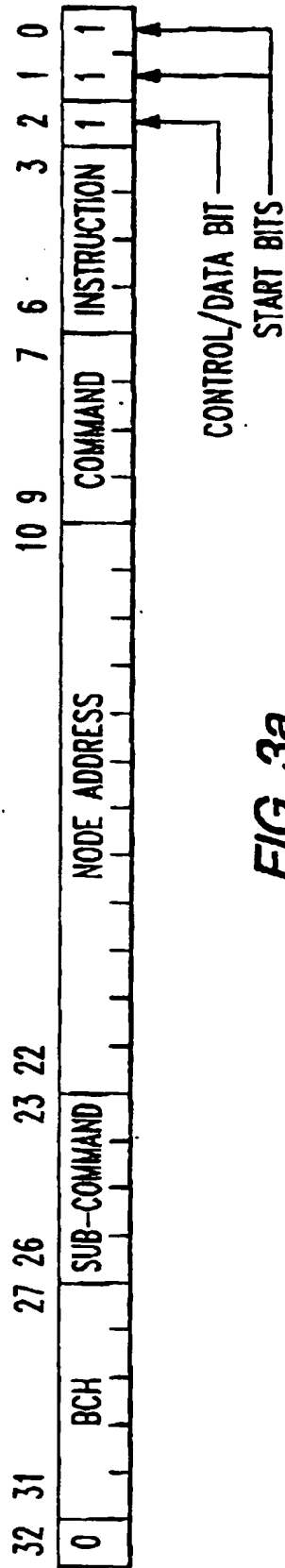


FIG. 3a

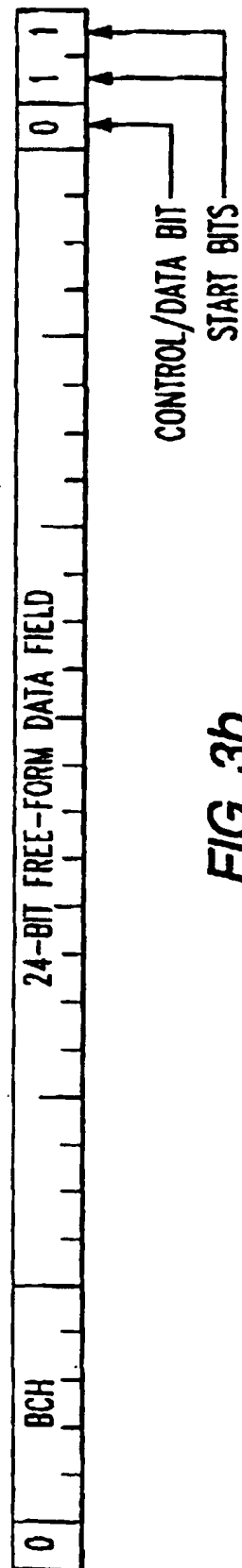


FIG. 3b

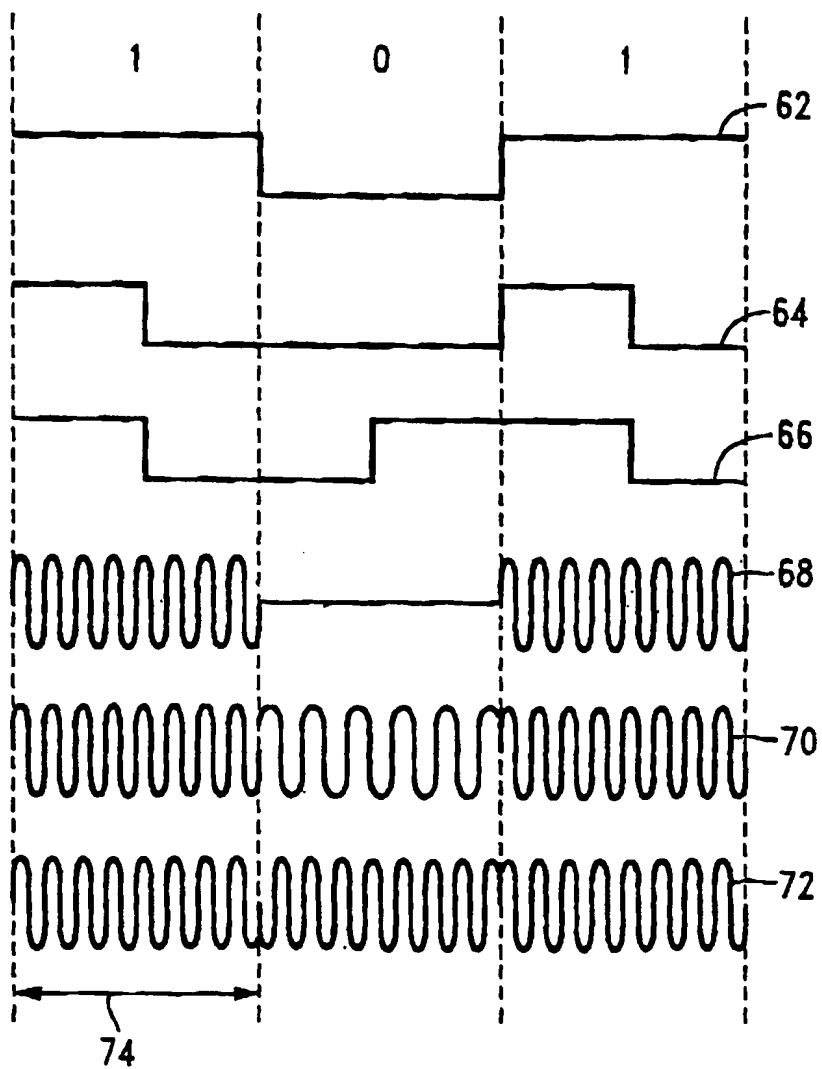
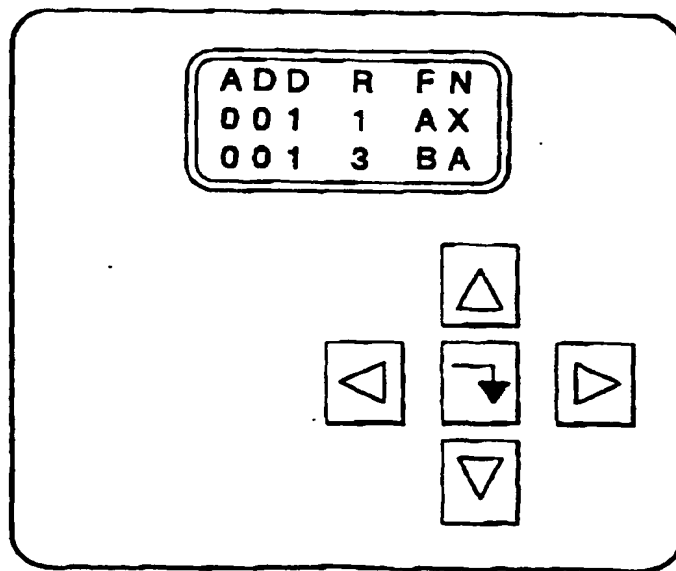
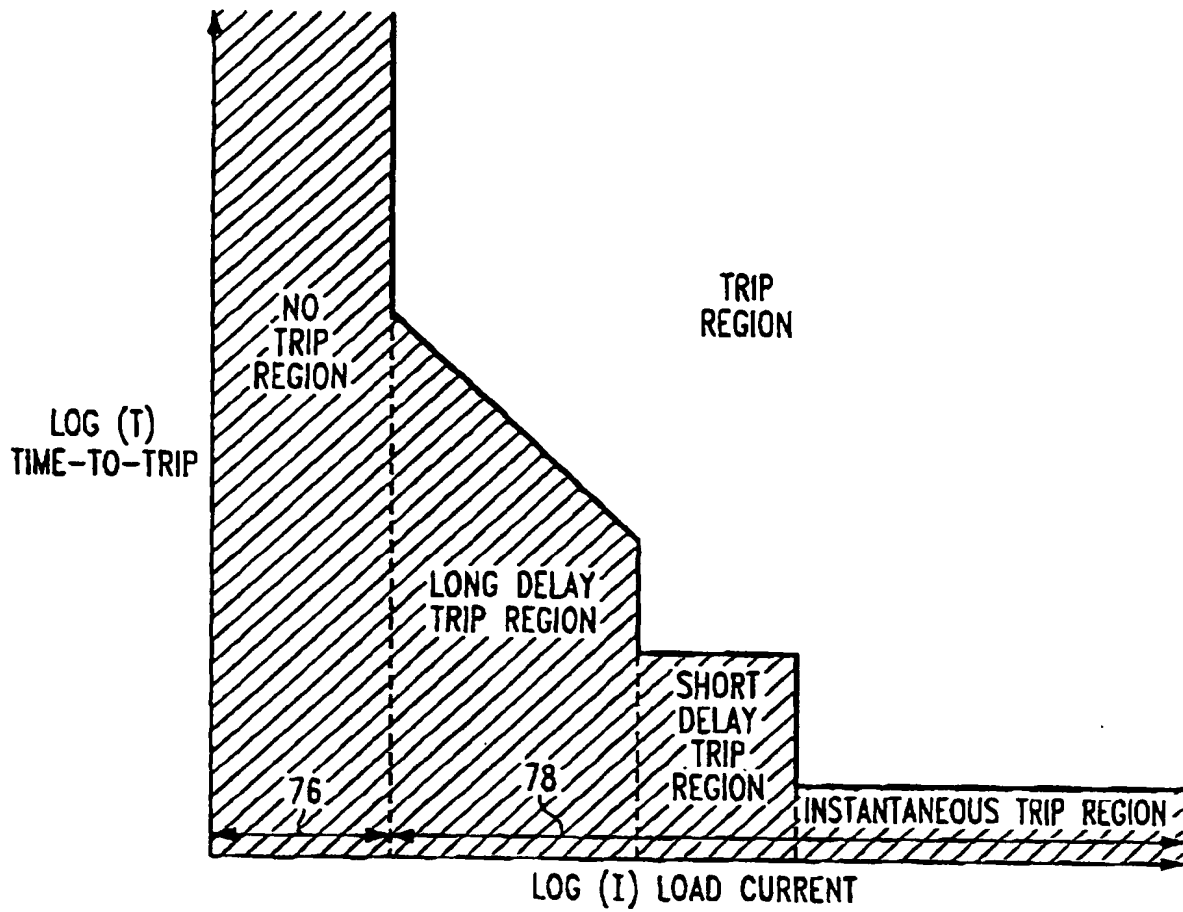


FIG. 4





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(54) Dual microprocessor electronic trip unit for a circuit interrupter

(57) An electronic trip unit (10) having two microprocessors (24 and 46) one of which (46) monitors the load voltage and current within the normal operating range and performs the metering and delayed trip algorithms associated with that range. A second microprocessor (24) monitors the load current for excursions outside the normal operating range and processes those algorithms and functions associated with the instantaneous and overcurrent trip protection modes of the trip unit (10). Each microprocessor (24 and 46) receives inputs representative of the monitored current that are scaled to a different factor corresponding to the range the microprocessors (24 and 46) are assigned to monitor. In one embodiment the electronic trip unit (10) is controlled by a master controller (38) and in turn controls a number of accessory devices (48), wherein one of the microprocessors (46) is a slave to the master controller network (38) and the other microprocessor (24) is a master to the accessory slave network (48). The microprocessors (24 and 46) communicate with each other and either one can trip the circuit on detection of a fault condition.

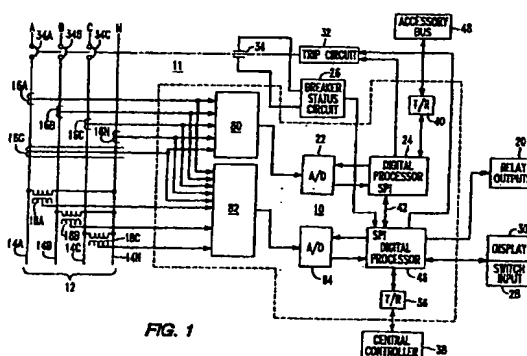


FIG. 1



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 99 10 6792

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search BERLIN		Date of completion of the search 6 February 2001	Examiner Hijazi, A
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 (3.82) (P04211)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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